

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed 06/03/2004 (hereinafter referred to as the OA) has been received, and its contents carefully studied. The applicant presents this response and amendment which applicant believes is fully responsive to the OA.

The applicant further believes that for the reasons set out below, the currently pending claims are in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests consideration for same.

Response To Claim Objections

The claims have been amended to address the errors pointed out on page 1 of the OA. Applicant thanks the Examiner for her corrections. Because of the amendments, Applicant believes the amended application has overcome the claims objections thereby.

Rejections Under 35 USC §103(a)

Pending claims 1 – 8 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being obvious in light of Burns et al. (US Patent 6,048,269, hereinafter Burns). Applicant will respond

to the rejections of independent claims 1 and 5 before addressing the rejection of the pending dependent claims.

Application believes independent claims 1 and 5 are allowable over Burns, having a combination of elements both (i) not each individually taught or shown in Burns and (ii) not shown nor configurable in the functional combination claimed. At least one difference is that the pending claims specifically require that the transactional identifier be generated by a terminal. This is not taught or disclosed in the cited prior art.

Before addressing specific rejections, Applicant feels it will be helpful to present an overview of Burns' system. The overview provides the background to make the difference between Burns' and the claimed invention clearer.

The Burns' System In Summary: Central Control With No Player Terminal Actions

Burns discloses a gaming system having a central server ("CPU" or "Host CPU" in Burns) and gaming machines, where the player may insert cash in the form of paper currency and cash-out slips into the gaming machine, with the gaming machine passing all information to the central server for processing. The Burns' gaming machine also has a printer usable to print cash-out slips. It is important to note that Burns teaches that any information on printed cash-out slips is generated by Burns' back-end system (see generally Burns' claims; also col. 2, lines 32-47).

Burns' gaming machine (player terminal) or cashier's terminal does not process or generate any information; the information on a cash-out slip is sent directly to the central server for processing and the printing of a cash-out slip is also completely controlled by the central server, including all data and information thereon. Thus, all ticket printing ("cash-out slip" printing) and all data read from tickets is sent to/from and controlled by Burns' central server (see generally Figure 1) connected to gaming machines via a network (col. 5, lines 8-15; col. 6 lines 21-36). The terminals in Burns send information read from tickets directly to the central server and the central server sends control information (including game credits - col. 5, lines 31-39) or information to be printed on a cash-out slip to the printer and/or game machine (col. 6, lines 21-46).

Also disclosed are cash-out machines, which sends the information read from the ticket to the central system, and where the central system either validates the ticket and send control information back to the cash-out machine to dispense a specific amount of cash, or declares the ticket invalid (col. 7, lines 5-29).

Burns also discloses the use of a random number, generated by and used only by the central system, as the method by which unique tickets can be generated and checked at a later time. The tickets each have the random number and value of the ticket recorded on the ticket itself (col. 6, lines 21-36), with the bar code having that information encoded therein generated by the server (not generated by any other machine).

The central computer in Burns (called a "CPU" or "Host CPU" in Burns) and not a gaming machine does the following:

- (i) generates any and all information to be printed on a pay-out stub (ticket) including the unique ticket ID;
- (ii) validates the ticket ID and the ticket value on tickets that are read by the ticket reader on a gaming machine by comparing the value read from the ticket with the value stored on the central system; and,
- (iii) sets any game credits derived from any tickets on each gaming machine.

Burns does not teach or suggest a gaming machine that can generate a unique identifier nor read and interpret (decode) the tickets input at the game machine. In Burns there is no processing done by the gaming machine: no data generation or data being acted upon; no ID generation; no decoding and/or decrypting of the tickets in order to process the information by the game machine; or, any similar functionality. The Burns' gaming machines are pass-through devices for the information on a ticket; this means the Burns' gaming machines pass data to and from the ticket reader/printer without acting on it or understanding it.

The Claimed System: Substantively Different Than Burns

The system and elements being claimed differ from Burns. The claimed system has terminal devices (including exchange terminals, cashier terminals, player terminals

and the like) where the terminals generate unique transaction IDs to uniquely identify each voucher (amongst other actions). The claimed system has a central server with a database configured to store each individual transaction and its data using the unique transaction numbers generated by the terminals as an identifier in the database. The terminals are active devices; the central server does not generate transaction numbers, the terminals do. The central server has the database having transaction IDs and associated data thereon; the central server is passive as compared to the server in Burns, and does not have the control that the Burns' server does (for example, does not control the voucher printer/readers on terminals, which Burns' server does).

The claimed system as a whole, as well as the specific elements therein including the terminal and server elements, is not disclosed or taught by Burns. The claimed terminals are not pass-through devices, as those in Burns are. The claimed terminal devices are enabled to issue vouchers by generating the unique transaction numbers (transaction IDs) then encoded and printed on the vouchers; additionally, the claimed terminals can read vouchers and interpret the raw data thereon, extracting and then sending transaction IDs and associated data as such (not as raw bar code data as taught in Burns, but as the transaction ID and the associated data already decoded from the bar code) to a central server. The central server in the currently pending claims stores the transaction ID generated by a terminal; it does not generate transaction IDs nor does it read and decode raw bar code data.

Thus, in Burns both the central server and the gaming machines are functionally different than that of the presently claimed system. Burns' central server receives raw data (bar codes) from the ticket reader/printer, extracts transaction numbers/IDs and associated information therefrom, generates all transaction IDs, stores them in memory, and directly controls each printer on each game machine.

The terminals and central server of the present invention are different elements than are taught in Burns, having different functional capabilities. In addition, the claimed system as a whole (all the elements put together) functions differently than Burns' system.

Specific Rejection Under 35 USC §103

Independent claims 1 and 5 are rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious in light of Burns. Applicant will address one clear distinction between the presently claimed invention and Burns (an aspect not taught or disclosed in Burns). The OA states the following (page 3, paragraph 3a):

“As per claim 1 ... to receive and to send cashless voucher indicia to a network, to receive data from the network, and to send cash value to the cash dispenser (col. 6, lines 28-36; col. 7, lines 9-11 and 55-56) ...”

Applicant respectfully disagrees. This statement is missing portions of Burns' teachings as found in his disclosure, and also does not address a claimed elements found in both

independent claims 1 and 5, creating an incorrect view thereby. Below is the cited language plus a few more sentences (col. 6, 21-46; col. 7, 5-14 and 20-25):

“... The printer 208 prints a bar code 222 on the cash out slips 220 responsive to the instructions from the CPU 100. The CPU 100 generates the bar code to be printed. The bar code 222 represents the monetary value of the value of the credit stored in the particular slot machine 200 on the cash out slips 220, along with a randomly generated number in order to permit the CPU 100 to verify the validity and unique identification of the cash out slip 220 at a later time. This is necessary since the bar code cash out slip 220 is capable of being inserted as an input into the bar code reader 206. Upon insertion of the cash out slip 220 into the bar code reader 206, the bar code reader 206 transmits a signal to the CPU 100 corresponding to the bar code, and the CPU 100 compares the bar code 222 on the particular cash out ticket with those stored in its memory which contains the value of the cash out slip, the unique identification, and its status. For example, the status may be "paid", in which case the cash out ticket will be consider invalid and no credit will be given for the cash out slip. Since the CPU 100 has randomly generated the unique identification, a cash out ticket can receive credit only once. The options available if the code is invalid are: (1) the slot machine will merely reject the cash out slip if it does not have any readable code, such as would be the case if it was blank paper; or (2) if there is a readable bar code, but one that is an invalid code, security will be called. ...”

“...Also associated with the CPU 100 are one or more change stations 300, 300a . . . n or convenient ATM 500, 500a . . . n devices which instead of dispensing cash, generate a coupon usable with the slot machines 200. In the preferred embodiment, the change station 300 consists of a second bar code reader 304 that accepts cash out slips 222. The validity of the cash out slip 222 is verified by the CPU 100, and if valid, paid for by the attendant. Other security devices, such as holograms and the like that can be visually inspected to provide further security may be employed as well. ... The second currency reader 302, second bar code reader 304, and second bar code printer 306 are the same as used in the slot machine 200. The change station 300 also includes a currency dispenser 308 so that when a cash out slip 222 is inserted into the bar code reader 306, then paper currency and coins can be dispensed directly to the user....”

As part of the teaching in Burns, Burns discloses and teaches that a gaming machine (a player terminal) sends all the raw data (Burns' bar code signal) to a central system or computer (Burns' "CPU"), where the CPU (central server) first generates a transaction ID, then encodes it and transmits it in encoded form (Burns' bar code data) to gaming machines. Burns further teaches receiving an encoded transmission from a gaming machines hwere the central server then decodes the raw data, extracts a transaction ID

which it (the central server) had previously generated, and then compares that transaction ID with already stored transaction IDs. The gaming machine does not understand or do anything to any data read on its ticket reader, and does not generate any data usable on a printed ticket; specifically gaming machines do not generate a transaction IDs.

The Burns disclosure goes to great length in explaining and teaching that all matter printed on cash-out slips at the terminals is/are generated by (originate from) the central system (called the "CPU" in Burns), specifically including every transaction ID.

Exemplar quotes include:

"... A central processing unit (CPU) generates the unique codes for ... the validity of the free play coupons ..." extracted from the Abstract;

"... The slot machine also includes a printer that prints and dispenses cash out slips having the value of the cash out slip represented by a bar code. The printer is controlled by a Central Processing Unit (CPU) ... The CPU is located in a secured office at the casino ... The bar code representing the value of the ... cash out slip ... is augmented by a unique control number randomly generated by the CPU ..." extracted from col. 2, lines 43-60; and,

"... printer 208 [*on a terminal*] prints bar code 222 on the cash out slips 220 responsive to the instructions from the CPU 100. The CPU 100 generates the bar code to be printed. ... Since the CPU 100 has randomly generated the unique identification ..." extracted from col. 6, lines 21-40 (*italicized words added for clarity*).

Similar quotes may be found throughout the disclosure. Thus, Burns' does not disclose or teach that terminals which generate (originate) transaction identifiers, where the terminal generated transaction IDs are then received by the claimed player terminal on a voucher. Transaction IDs generated by terminals is a limitation of the presently pending claims that appears to be missing from the claims rejection analysis. Applicant perceived

the AO language as trying to say that as long as any data is sent to the network interface, it reads on the presently claimed invention. That is incorrect. The presently claimed invention sends processed data that is limited to include transaction IDs generated by other player terminals or exchange terminals. That restriction as part of each independent claim and is found as the following claims language in claims 1 and 5:

“...where said transaction identifier was previously generated by a player terminal or an exchange terminal...”

This limits the presently claimed invention to only those systems where a terminal rather than a central system generates transaction identifiers (Burns teaches that ONLY the central system can generate transaction identifiers). This is a significant difference over Burns. To do this, the entire system has be architected differently than Burns' system, and additionally there must be intelligence built into the terminals of the present system which requires significantly different engineering as compared to the terminals disclosed and taught in Burns. These significant differences are not disclosed or taught by Burns.

In summary, Burns does not disclose, teach, or suggest the functionality found in the terminals of the presently claimed invention, nor does Burns teach the reception of transaction IDs that were created by other terminals in the system. For at least this reason, Applicant believes independent claims 1 and 5 are patentable over Burns.

**Rejection of dependent claims 2-4 depending from claim 1 and dependent claims 6-8
depending from claim 5**

Responding to OA rejections of the above-listed dependent claims and without reaching the specific arguments therein, since each dependent claim inherits the elements and limitations from the independent claim from which it depends, and since Applicant believes Applicant has shown each currently pending independent claim (1 and 5) is patentable over Burns, then each dependent claim is also patentable over Burns.

Overview Summary

Applicant respectfully submits Applicant has shown the presently pending claims are not obvious in light of Burns. This is due to the fact that that at least, there is no teaching of the functionality contained in the individual elements of the presently claimed invention (generation of transaction identifiers in terminals later received by other terminals) in the cited prior art.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections thereby, and respectfully requests consideration for allowance.

Conclusion

It is believed that this office action response and amendment is fully responsive to the OA and places the above-identified patent application into condition for allowance. Please feel free to contact the undersigned attorney with any questions, or for a discussion to clarify any aspects of this response.

Respectfully submitted,



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